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LARGER TURKEY CROP EXPECTED THIS YEAR

Turkey growers plan to raise 39,481,000 turkeys this year. This would be about 8 percent more than the record crop of last year. Turkey producers in the West North Central States, who produced 29 percent of the turkeys raised in 1944, plan an increase of 10 percent this year. In the West, where 31 percent of last year's crop was produced, the expected increase is 6 percent; in the East North Central and North Atlantic States 20 percent and in the South Atlantic, 13 percent. Producers in the South Central, who raised 15 percent of the 1944 turkeys, plan a decrease of 4 percent this year.

Some difference between January 1 intentions and actual performance is to be expected, the difference depending on the supply and price of hatching eggs, poult prices and prospective feed prices. Last year the number of turkeys raised exceeded the January intentions by 8 percent, the first time the intentions have been exceeded in 7 years of record. In former years, however, the intentions have exceeded actual performance -- in 1938 by 3 percent, in 1939 and 1940 by 2 percent, in 1941 by less than 1 percent, in 1942 by 8 percent and in 1943 by 12 percent.

More breeder hens and favorable weather during the early 1944 hatching season were conducive to a heavy early hatch and most producers were able to secure the desired number of poults earlier than usual. Young turkey losses were below average and the growing season was favorable. The 1943 season, however, was late, egg fertility was low and death loss in brooding prevented any increase over 1942 in turkeys raised. Conditions were similar in 1942 when producers raised 8 percent fewer turkeys than they intended early in the season.

With a 6 percent increase in breeder hens on January 1 this year compared with a year ago, there should be no difficulty in getting enough eggs to meet the demand for 8 percent more poults without resorting to late hatchings. With favorable weather during the hatching and brooding season, turkey producers should have no trouble in meeting their plans this year to produce another record turkey crop.

Turkey egg settings in January and orders booked by hatcheries on February 1 for poults for future delivery are considerably larger than last year, although hatchings last year were earlier than usual. This does not indicate necessarily that poult hatchings will be that much larger than last year; it may mean that more early eggs are available and producers are placing their orders earlier this year in order to produce more early birds.

RECORD NUMBER OF BREEDER HENS THIS YEAR

There was a record number of breeder hens on farms January 1 -- 4,675,000 or 6 percent above a year ago and 1 percent above the previous record high number on January 1, 1940. Breeder hens increased in all parts of the country except the South Central States where there was no change. Increases above a year ago were 23 percent in the North Atlantic, 16 percent in the East North Central, 13 percent in the South Atlantic, 9 percent in the West and 1 percent in the West North Central States. About half of the Nation's breeder hens are located in the 5 States of Texas, California, Oregon, Minnesota and Missouri, ranking in the order named. These States showed increases in breeders over a year ago from 20 percent in Oregon to 5 percent in Texas. Texas has 704,000 breeder hens and California had 652,000. Because of a larger egg production per hen, however, California produces more eggs than Texas. In these 5 States, millions of eggs are produced for shipment to hatcheries all over the United States.

BIRDS SOLD AT HEAVIER WEIGHT IN 1944

The average live weight per turkey sold in 1944 was 17.2 pounds, a pound heavier than in 1943. Hens sold averaged 13.4 pounds live weight compared with 12.9 pounds in 1943 and toms averaged 21.0 pounds compared with 19.5 in 1943. The heaviest birds were produced in the West where the broad-breasted turkey is found in greatest numbers and birds are raised to heavier weights largely for the hotel and restaurant trade.

The Army demand for early turkeys for shipment overseas was much larger in 1944 than in 1943. In order to get early birds the Government paid above ceiling prices. However, the receipts of early birds did not reach expectations so the Government was forced to place an embargo on sales of turkeys to other than the Government in surplus turkey producing areas. This embargo was not lifted until November 6, too late for many birds to reach the Thanksgiving market. Because it is profitable to feed turkeys to heavier weights and there was a demand for any type of bird, which far exceeded the supply, turkey growers fed their birds to heavier weights for the Christmas and New Year's markets.

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AVERAGE LIVE WEIGHT PER TURKEY WHEN SOLD IN 1943-44

Geographic Division	Hens		Toms		All	
	1943	1944	1943	1944	1943	1944
	Pounds					
North Atlantic	12.4	12.7	18.4	19.2	15.4	16.0
East North Central	12.5	13.3	18.5	20.0	15.5	16.6
West North Central	12.7	13.4	19.1	21.3	15.9	17.4
South Atlantic	12.3	12.6	18.1	19.0	15.2	15.8
South Central	12.1	12.6	17.7	18.9	14.9	15.7
Western	13.7	14.1	21.9	23.0	17.8	18.5
United States	12.9	13.4	19.5	21.0	16.2	17.2

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DEATH LOSS LIGHTER THIS YEAR

Loss of turkey poults in 1944 was the lightest since 1940. It was 25.9 percent of the number bought and home hatched compared with 29.7 percent in 1943 and 27.0 percent for the 5-year (1938-42) average.

Factors responsible for a lighter loss of young turkeys this year were favorable weather during the early hatching season resulting in an early hatch of strong poults which got off to a good start, generally quite favorable growing period despite heavier than usual losses from predatory animals in the South and South West, and very few losses from fall storms.

Breeding hen losses in 1944 were the lightest in the last 3 years -- 10.8 percent compared with 11.8 percent in 1943 and 10.4 percent for the 5-year average. Losses of hens were lighter than last year in all parts of the country except the North Atlantic and South Central States, where losses were 1 and 2 points higher, respectively, than in 1943.

DEATH LOSS OF TURKEYS

Geographic Division	Young turkeys lost as a percent of total numbers bought and home hatched					Breeding stock lost as a percent of numbers on hand January 1				
	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
	Percent					Percent				
North Atlantic	19	17	19	23	23	9	7	8	8	9
East North Central	19	21	23	23	23	10	10	11	12	10
West North Central	29	24	28	29	23	10	10	10	13	11
South Atlantic	28	27	31	38	30	11	10	11	13	11
South Central	31	45	43	44	38	13	13	16	14	16
Western	20	22	21	21	22	5	8	7	8	7
United States	25.9	27.8	28.8	29.7	25.9	9.4	10.1	11.1	11.8	10.8

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TURKEY HENS ON HAND AND INTENTIONS TO RAISE TURKEYS IN 1945

State and Division	Turkey hens on hand Jan. 1 1944			Turkeys raised Intended in 1945		
	Thousands	Number	Pct.	Thousands	Number	Pct.
Me.	6	8	133	43	49	115
N.H.	8	10	125	71	89	125
Vt.	12	16	133	159	191	120
Mass.	33	43	130	227	263	116
R.I.	3	4	133	30	33	110
Conn.	16	23	144	146	231	158
N.Y.	43	47	110	428	449	105
N.J.	20	24	120	192	250	130
Pa.	67	80	120	1,285	1,542	120
N.Atl.	208	255	122.6	2,581	3,097	120.0
Ohio	85	106	125	979	1,057	108
Ind.	47	61	130	612	796	130
Ill.	96	118	123	828	1,076	130
Mich.	69	69	100	612	796	130
Wis.	67	67	100	692	761	110
E.N.Cent.	364	421	115.7	3,723	4,486	120.5
Minn.	308	354	115	3,341	3,642	109
Iowa	142	128	90	2,147	2,362	110
Mo.	254	279	110	1,532	1,838	120
N.Dak.	155	105	68	992	1,042	105
S.Dak.	75	63	84	468	468	100
Nebr.	128	141	110	1,208	1,305	108
Kans.	124	128	103	948	995	105
W.N.Cent.	1,186	1,198	101.0	10,636	11,652	109.6
Del.	12	15	125	107	118	110
Md.	40	52	130	400	460	115
Va.	105	121	115	986	1,085	110
W.Va.	22	20	91	254	292	115
N.C.	30	29	97	277	346	125
S.C.	54	68	126	307	368	120
Ga.	31	28	90	168	165	98
Fla.	25	26	104	118	125	106
S.Atl.	319	359	112.5	2,617	2,959	113.1
Ky.	41	41	100	267	267	100
Tenn.	31	26	84	190	190	100
Ala.	43	34	80	144	144	100
Miss.	43	39	90	111	117	105
Ark.	30	28	93	132	139	105
La.	22	18	82	69	62	90
Okla.	162	154	95	954	954	100
Tex.	670	704	105	3,761	3,535	94
S.Cent.	1,042	1,044	100.2	5,628	5,408	96.1
Mont.	22	17	76	253	228	90
Idaho	24	24	100	272	272	100
Wyo.	24	23	95	167	184	110
Colo.	66	66	100	861	930	108
N.Mex.	14	14	100	52	52	100
Ariz.	10	11	110	93	107	115
Utah	50	65	130	1,743	1,656	95
Nev.	7	8	110	40	44	110
Wash.	128	134	105	1,387	1,526	110
Oreg.	320	384	120	2,084	2,292	110
Calif.	615	652	106	4,260	4,588	107
West.	1,280	1,398	109.2	11,212	11,879	105.9
U.S.	4,399	4,675	106.3	36,397	39,481	108.5

